UNITED NATIONS

Daily Highlights

Department of Public Information • Central News Section • New York

Prepared by Central News

DH/1766
4 November 1994

FRIDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Security Council extends UNOSOM II mandate for final period until 31 March 1995; says military forces will be withdrawn from Somalia in secure and orderly manner as soon as possible; urges Somali factions to negotiate cease-fire and formation of transitional government.

+ Security Council, in Presidential statement, sets out procedures to enhance arrangements for consultation and exchanges of information with troop-contributing countries.

+ General Assembly encourages Security Council to consider lifting arms embargo against Bosnia and Herzegovina; resolution adopted by 97 votes in favour to none against, with 61 abstentions.

+ Secretary-General arrives in Geneva after official visit to Moldova; to hold meetings next week on differences between Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Greece, and security in Rwandese refugee camps.

+ Co-Chairmen of International Conference on Former Yugoslavia meet with Foreign Ministers of Croatia and Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) in Zagreb.

+ Disarmament and International Security Committee discusses draft resolution calling for moratorium on export of anti-personnel land-mines.

* * *

The Security Council today extended the mandate of the United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM II) for a final period until 31 March 1995. It said every effort should be made to withdraw all UNOSOM II military forces and assets from Somalia in a secure and orderly manner as soon as possible before that date, and without comprimising the safety of the Operation's personnel. The Council took that action, under Chapter VII of the Charter, by unanimously adopting resolution 954 (1994).

The Council affirmed that the primary purpose of UNOSOM II until its termination was to facilitate political reconciliation in Somalia. It urged

For information media—not an official record

all Somali factions to negotiate as soon as possible an effective cease-fire and the formation of a transitional government of national unity. The Council emphasized the responsibility of the Somali parties for the safety of UNOSOM II and other personnel engaged in humanitarian activities, and strongly demanded that they refrain from any acts of intimidation or violence against those personnel. It asked Member States to provide assistance in the withdrawal process.

The resolution invited the Organization of African Unity (OAU), the League of Arab States, and the Organization of the Islamic Conference to continue their efforts in cooperation with the United Nations in the search for peace in Somalia. It called on Member States, particularly neighbouring ones, to continue to support Somali peace and reconciliation efforts. It also reiterated the need for strict compliance with the embargo on arms deliveries to Somalia.

The Council asked the Secretary-General to keep it informed about developments in Somalia, and to report before 31 March 1995 on the situation there, with suggestions on the role the United Nations could play in the country beyond that date.

* * *

The Security Council today said that there was a need for further enhancement, in a pragmatic and flexible manner, of arrangements for consultation and exchanges of information with troop-contributing countries. In a statement by i s President, Madeleine Albright (United States), the Council laid out certain procedures to be followed in that regard in future.

Meetings should be held as a matter of course between Council members, troop contributors and the Secretariat to facilitate the exchange of information and views in good time before the Council decided to extend, terminate or change the mandate of a peace-keeping operation, the President said. Such meetings would be chaired jointly by the Council Presidency and a representative of the Secretariat nominated by the Secretary-General.

The monthly tentative forecast of Council work would in future indicate the expected schedule of meetings. Ad hoc meetings chaired jointly by the Council Presidency and a representative of the Secretariat might be convened in the event of unforeseen developments in a particular operation which could require action by the Council. An informal paper, including topics to be covered, would be circulated to participants well in advance of meetings. In the course of informal Council consultations, the President would summarize the views expressed by participants at each meeting with troop contributors.

Consultations might take a variety of forms, including informal communication between the Council President or its members and troop contributors and, as appropriate, with other countries especially affected. The Council would keep under review arrangements for the exchange of

(more)

information and views with troop contributors, and arrangements to improve the quality and speed of the information available to support Council decision-making.

* * *

The General Assembly yesterday encouraged the Security Council to give all due consideration and exempt the Governments of the Republic and Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina from the arms embargo originally imposed by resolution 713 (1991). Implementation of that exemption would take place in six months if the Bosnian Serbs had not accepted the peace plan proposed by the Contact Group (France, Germany, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom and the United States). In a resolution adopted by 97 votes in favour to none against, with 61 abstentions, the Assembly demanded that the Bosnian Serbs immediately and unconditionally accept the territorial settlement contained in the proposed plan.

The Assembly urged the Security Council, in fulfilling its responsibilities for the maintenance of international peace and security, to take all appropriate steps to uphold and restore fully the sovereignty, political independence, territorial integrity and unity of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina. It urged Member States to cooperate with the Republic in exercise of its inherent right to self-defence, and demanded that the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) uphold its commitment to end any military and logistical support to the Bosnian Serbs.

The United States said that lifting the embargo meant risks, but that inaction meant greater risks and denied the Bosnian Government its right of self-defence. While there were grounds for the fear that the Bosnian Serbs would retaliate against United Nations personnel should the embargo be lifted, the Serbs could not be allowed to blackmail the Organization into denying the Bosnian Government its rights. The Russian Federation abstained from voting, saying that the resolution was one-sided and incomplete and did not adequately reflect the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

* * *

Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali today concluded his visit to Armenia and then paid an official visit to Moldova. He met with the President of the Republic, and discussed United Nations economic and disaster assistance to Moldova and other issues. He also addressed the Moldovan Parliament, and visited a United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) office.

The Secretary-General later departed for Geneva, where he is scheduled to have several meetings next week. The need for progress towards resolving the differences between The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Greece will be the subject of a meeting on Monday. On Tuesday, he will chair a meeting focusing on the security situation in Rwandese refugee camps. Special Representative Shahryar Khan and the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, José Ayala Lasso, will be among the participants in Tuesday's meeting.

(more)

* * *

The Co-Chairmen of the International Conference on the Former Yugoslavia, Thorvald Stoltenberg and Lord Owen, met today in Zagreb with the Foreign Minister of Croatia, Mate Granic, and the Foreign Minister of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro), Vladislav Jovanovic.

The Co-Chairmen later described that meeting as potentially one of the most important to have taken place in the former Yugoslavia since the outbreak of fighting in 1991. It was now up to the Governments of Croatia and the Federal Republic to make the most of the opportunity for reconciliation and economic cooperation, they said.

In a separate development, Bosnian Government and Bosnian Croat forces today took the town of Kupres in central Bosnia and Herzegovina after coordinated offensives against the Bosnian Serbs, according to a United Nations spokesman. Meanwhile, Bosnian Serb forces fired missiles into Bihac, resulting in a strong protest by the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR).

* * *

The First Committee (Disarmament and International Security) yesterday began its consideration of a series of draft resolutions dealing with such issues as a moratorium on the export of anti-personnel land mines, transparency in armaments, and development of the Register of Conventional Arms. Other drafts to be considered deal with possible topics for discussion in the Disarmament Commission and the Conference on Disarmament, the establishment of various nuclear-weapon-free zones, and confidence-building measures.

Introducing the draft resolution calling for a moratorium on the export of land-mines, the United States said land-mines were an economic development issue, a human rights issue and an environmental issue. Sponsored by 61 States, the draft welcomes programmes for demining and humanitarian aid to victims of anti-personnel mines. It encourages international efforts to solve the problems caused by such mines, with a view to their eventual elimination.

The representative of Cambodia said that at least eight million land-mines were scattered over the most arable parts of his country. One out of every 236 Cambodians was an amputee as a result. The best solution to the global problem was a complete ban on the production, use and transfer of such weapons, followed by their complete elimination.

* *** *